



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## V.—INFLUENCE OF THE COURT-MASQUES ON THE DRAMA, 1608–15.

During the reign of James I., court-masques attained a great importance both as splendid spectacles and in the literature of the time. They were very numerous, were produced at great expense, and engaged the services of the best poets of the day. Usually performed at a marriage, or on some festival like those of the Christmas season, they consisted primarily of two parts, (1) the dramatic dialogue usually setting forth some allegorical or mythological device which formed the basis of an impressive spectacle, and (2) the dances interspersed with songs and accompanied by music. These dances were performed by ladies and gallants of the highest court circles, the queen often participating. In addition to these elements, about the year 1608 a third appeared, the anti-masque, consisting of grotesque dances by 'antick' personages. These comic anti-masques at once became exceedingly popular and played no small part in the entertainments. The antic dancers were almost always actors from the public theatres.<sup>1</sup>

This last fact points to an interesting connection between the masques and the drama, for it establishes an *a priori* probability that the antic dances used in the masques would be performed again in the theatres. As Mr. Harold Little-  
dale has shown,<sup>2</sup> such a repetition of an anti-masque does undoubtedly occur in the *Two Noble Kinsmen*, borrowed from Beaumont's *Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn*, 1613. When presented at court, this anti-masque won especial praise

<sup>1</sup> For proof of the statements in this paragraph, see *Die Englischen Maskenspiele*. Alfred Soergel. Halle, 1882.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, ed. Harold Little-  
dale, New Shakspere Society. Series II, 7, 8, 15, 1876–85. Mr. Little-  
dale was unacquainted with Dr. Soergel's investigation and gave this borrowing less prominence than it deserves in fixing the date.

from His Majesty and others because it presented various characters and costumes. This was an entire innovation, for in previous anti-masques the dancers had all been of one sort. In the play the same personages appear as in the court-masque—a Lord and Lady of May, a chamber-maid, serving-man, mine host and his fat spouse, a traveller, tapster, clown, fool and baboon; and the dance, like that in the masque, is a grotesque May-dance. The evidence for the borrowing is complete. It is inconceivable that this anti-masque should have been introduced into the notable court entertainment after it had been staled on the public stage. It is, on the contrary, entirely probable that Fletcher introduced into the play the dance which had won a great success in the Court-masque, and which was probably danced by some of the same actors who had performed at court. It is also probable that Fletcher used the anti-masque shortly after the court entertainment, while the novelty and success of the dance were common talk; a few years later and other anti-masques would have been chosen. The date of the *Two Noble Kinsmen* is thus fairly well fixed at 1613.

This instance may serve as an illustration of the value of a knowledge of court-masques in determining the dates of Jacobean plays. In this paper I shall attempt to determine the date of the *Winter's Tale* from the use of an anti-masque of satyrs.

The influence of the masque on the drama in a more general way has been emphasized by Mr. Fleay and treated at length by Dr. Soergel. The nature of this influence in the reign of James I., however, has not been fully examined. The masque in its simple form—a dance by a group of revelers with or without an introductory speech—was common enough in the earlier drama; but as the court-masque grew more elaborate, its machinery, costumes, mythological devices, anti-masques, and, indeed, its general construction were borrowed or imitated so freely by the dramatists that its influence on the drama was distinctly important.

Beaumont and Fletcher seem to have been among the leaders in setting this new dramatic fashion, for their plays contain a great deal of masque pageantry; gods and goddesses ascending and descending, clouds opening, antic dances and even complete masques. There are, in fact, distinct masque elements in sixteen of their plays. Of these, their *Four Plays in One* is the most notable example. The *Four Plays* are given in the form of an entertainment before a king and his bride, and the last, the *Triumph of Time*, has unmistakably the form of a masque. Theme, spectacle and dances all follow the recognized fashion. Mercury and Time appear: "one-half of a cloud is drawn," "singers are discovered," "then the other half is drawn and Jupiter seen in his glory." The main masque is danced by Delight, Pleasure, Lucre, Craft, Vanity, etc., and there is also an anti-masque of a "Troop of Indians, singing and dancing wildly about Plutus." Here, too, we have not merely an introduction of masque-like pageantry, but a skilful effort to combine romantic drama and a court-masque. Beaumont and Fletcher were undoubtedly promoting what Ben Jonson, who did not mix his masques and plays, called the "concupiscence of dances and antics,"<sup>1</sup> which in 1612 he declared began to reign on the stage.

In this paper I shall not attempt to trace farther the general influence of the masque on the drama, but shall try to show that another instance of a combination of masque and romantic comedy exists in Shakspeare's *Tempest*.

First, in regard to the date of the *Winter's Tale*. It is described in Dr. Forman's note-book, under the date of May 11, 1611. This is the final limit for the date. I think the early limit is determined by Ben Jonson's *Masque of Oberon*, January 1, 1611.

This contains an anti-masque of satyrs, and I conjecture that the dance of satyrs in the *Winter's Tale* was directly

<sup>1</sup> See "Address to the reader," *Alchemist*, 4to, 1612.

suggested by this anti-masque. Anti-masques were, as we have seen, first introduced in 1608 and at once became very popular. In *Oberon* there is one of these antic dances, doubtless performed by actors from the public theatres. This was a dance of ten (or twelve) satyrs, "with bells on their shaggy thighs," and is thus described :

"Here they fell suddenly into an antic dance full of strange gesture and swift motion, and continued it until the crowing of the cock."

And again, later, after the entrance of *Oberon*, there was a little more dancing by the satyrs.

"And the satyrs beginning to leap, and express their joy for the unused state and solemnity."

In the *Winter's Tale* (IV, 4) there is a similar antic dance of twelve satyrs which is clearly an addition to please the audiences of the day.

"*Servant*. Master, there is three carters, three shepherds, three neat-herds, three swine-herds, that have made themselves all men of hair, they call themselves Saltiers, and they have a dance which the wenches say is a gallimaufry of gambols, because they are not in 't; but they themselves are o' the mind, if it be not too rough for some that know little but bowling, it will please plentifully.

*Shepherd*. Away! we'll none on 't: here has been too much homely foolery already. I know, sir, we weary you.

*Polixenes*. You weary those that refresh us: pray, let's see these four threes of herdsmen.

*Servant*. One three of them, by their own report, sir, hath danced before the king; and not the worst of the three but jumps twelve foot and a half by the squier.

*Shepherd.* Leave your prating : since these good men  
are pleased, let them come in ; but quickly now.

*Servant.* Why, they stay at door, sir. [Exit.

*Here a dance of twelve satyrs."*

Like the dancers in the masque these are great leapers, and like those they are men of hair. Moreover, three of them by their own report had danced before the king, as did the satyrs in the masque.

Now, while satyrs are not altogether uncommon on the Elizabethan stage, a dance of satyrs "full of gesture and swift motion" was certainly an innovation. Such anti-masques were only introduced about 1608, and such a dance of satyrs is not found in any of the court-masques before (or, for that matter, after) 1611. The *Winter's Tale* is generally dated about the first of 1611, therefore, either Jonson must have borrowed from the public stage the idea of an antic dance of satyrs for his masque at court, or Shakspeare must have borrowed from the court-masque this new and popular stage device for his *Winter's Tale*. The second alternative is far more probable because of the great importance of the court-masques and the desire for novelty in them, and because the public may naturally be supposed to have been anxious to see a reproduction of a popular anti-masque. It gains additional probability from the fact that actors from the theatres performed in these anti-masques and from the reference to the three who had already danced before the king. It is still more probable because an anti-masque in Beaumont's *Masque of the Inner Temple* is obviously made use of in a similar way in the *Two Noble Kinsmen*. Finally, we may note that the dance is an integrant part of the *Masque of Oberon*, while it is a pure addition to the play.

The probability, then, is very strong that Jonson devised this dance of satyrs for his *Masque of Oberon*, where it was performed by actors from the King's men, and that Shakspeare introduced the dance, doubtless with some variations but with some of the same actors, in the *Winter's Tale*. This fixes

the date of the play between January 1 and May 11, 1611, which harmonizes with the generally assigned date 1610-11.

Now, in regard to the influence of the court-masques on the *Tempest*. That poem, which to us is so full of beneficent idealism, on the Elizabethan stage must have seemed largely an effort to satisfy the craving for spectacular novelties. Caliban, that immensely taking Elizabethan stage-beast who has proved so prophetically philosophical, must have been the hit of the play. Then there was the old device borrowed from *Midsummer Night's Dream* of the invisible Ariel bewildering the courtiers; and there was the still older business of the vanishing banquet "accomplished with a quaint device." Then there were the drunken scenes, such as Shakspeare had used before, but now made especially diverting when the climax was reached and the dogs chased the drenched and filthy boors about the stage, while Prospero and Ariel cried on quarry. Prospero himself, with his magician's robe and wand, must have made an imposing spectacular figure.

Prospero and Ariel are, indeed, proper figures for a masque, and the "strange shapes," like the satyrs in the *Winter's Tale*, are nothing more nor less than an anti-masque. Note, for proof, the stage directions.

III, 3. "Enter several strange Shapes, bringing in a banquet; they dance about it with gentle actions of salutation; and, inviting the king, etc. to eat, they depart."

Again, a little later, after Ariel in the form of a harpy has vanished in thunder.

III, 3, l. 82. "then, to soft music, enter the Shapes again, and dance, with mocks and mows, and carrying out the table."

Still again—

IV, 1. "A noise of hunters heard. Enter divers Spirits, in shape of dogs and hounds," etc.

The anti-masques at the court often appeared in shape of animals, as goats (*Honour of Wales*, 1619) and bears (*Augurs*, 1622) and monkeys.

These grotesque spirits, then, in shape of dogs, and, earlier, with their dancing and mocks and mows, must, just as certainly as the masque proper in the fourth act, have been suggested by the court-masques. The antic dances and performance of the Shapes, together with the devices of Prospero and Ariel, make, in fact, an unmistakable masque-setting for the masque proper, with its goddesses and graceful dance of nymphs and reapers.

Thus in the *Tempest* Shakspeare was combining the construction, pageantry, and devices of the court-masque with a romantic comedy, just as Beaumont and Fletcher did in the *Four Plays*. Ben Jonson, in fact, seems to have considered Shakspeare a leading offender, for in protesting against the jigs and dances he especially mentions "those that beget tales, tempests and other like drolleries."<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to note, in conclusion, that while Shakspeare led or followed the fashion of borrowing suggestions from the masque, he combined his masque-material with his play much more skilfully than any of his contemporaries. Beaumont and Fletcher's *Four Plays* is a rare instance of a similar attempt to unite the diverse elements. Usually, the anti-masque, or the spectacle, or the masque proper, is dragged into the play. In the *Tempest*, however, the strange shapes and the goddesses suit the atmosphere of the enchanted island and play a natural part in the magic of Ariel and Prospero. Shakspeare, as usual, merely adopted a convention, mastered it, and forced it into the service of his imagination.

ASHLEY H. THORNDIKE.

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to *Bartholemew Fair*, 1614.